

Having described the invention, the following is claimed:

1. An apparatus for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle that has a roof, a side structure, and a trim piece overlying the side structure, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable curtain that is inflatable away from the vehicle roof to a position adjacent the side structure of the vehicle;

an inflation fluid source for providing inflation fluid for inflating said inflatable curtain;

a fill tube for directing inflation fluid from said inflation fluid source into said inflatable curtain; and

a bracket for connecting said fill tube to the vehicle, said bracket comprising:

a fill tube support portion connectable with said fill tube;

a connecting portion connectable with the vehicle; and

a deployment portion for directing said inflatable curtain to deploy inboard of the trim piece.

2. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said fill tube support portion has a curved configuration with first and second opposite ends, said connecting portion extending transversely from said first end of said clamping portion, said deployment portion extending transversely from said second end of said clamping portion.

3. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said fill tube support portion at least partially encircles a portion of said fill tube to connect said bracket to said fill tube.

4. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said fill tube support portion has an inner surface with a cylindrical portion that mates with a cylindrical outer surface of said fill tube.

5. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said fill tube support portion includes a tab portion deformable into engagement with said fill tube to help connect said fill tube support portion to said fill tube.

6. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said deployment portion extends away from the side structure when the bracket is connected to the vehicle.

7. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said deployment portion defines a concave channel for receiving said inflatable curtain in a deflated and stored condition.

8. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said inflatable curtain includes apertures that expose portions of said fill tube, said fill tube support portion connecting with said exposed portions of said fill tube.

9. The apparatus recited in claim 1, further comprising a fabric sheath for at least partially surrounding said inflatable curtain in a stored condition, said inflatable curtain when in said stored condition being at least one of folded and rolled into a position extending along an intersection of the side structure of the vehicle and the vehicle roof.

10. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said deployment portion comprises a first portion that extends along the side structure of the vehicle away from the vehicle roof and a second portion that extends transverse to said first portion away from the side structure and inboard in the vehicle.

11. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said bracket has a length, said deployment portion extending substantially along the length of said bracket, said fill tube support portion comprising a plurality of supports spaced along the length of said bracket, said connecting portion comprising a plurality of flanges spaced along the length of said bracket.

12. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said deployment portion extends below said inflatable curtain when said inflatable curtain is in a stored and deflated condition.

13. A bracket for supporting a fill tube and an inflatable curtain adjacent a trim piece in a vehicle, said bracket comprising:

a fill tube support portion connectable with the fill tube;

a connecting portion connectable with the vehicle; and

a deployment portion for directing said inflatable curtain to deploy inboard of the trim piece.

14. The bracket recited in claim 13, wherein said fill tube support portion has a curved configuration with first and second opposite ends, said connecting portion extending transversely from said first end of said clamping portion, said deployment portion extending transversely from said second end of said clamping portion.

15. The bracket recited in claim 13, wherein said fill tube support portion includes a tab portion deformable into engagement with said fill tube to help connect said fill tube support portion to said fill tube.

16. The bracket recited in claim 13, wherein said deployment portion defines a concave channel for

receiving said inflatable curtain in a deflated and stored condition.

17. The bracket recited in claim 13, wherein said deployment portion extends below the inflatable curtain when the inflatable curtain is in a stored and deflated condition.

18. An apparatus for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle that has a roof, a side structure, and a trim piece overlying the side structure, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable curtain that is inflatable away from the vehicle roof to a position adjacent the side structure of the vehicle;

an inflation fluid source for providing inflation fluid for inflating said inflatable curtain;

a fill tube for directing inflation fluid from said inflation fluid source into said inflatable curtain; and

a bracket for connecting said fill tube to the vehicle and for directing said inflatable curtain to deploy inboard of the trim piece.